

THE
CHRISTIAN MONITOR.

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FOR THE CHRISTIAN MONITOR.

HINTS ON PREACHING.

FEW things appear to me so affecting as the sight of a young man just receiving his commission to go and preach the Gospel. How arduous is the work undertaken! How numerous and trying the difficulties to be encountered! How awful the responsibility incurred!—Well might even an Apostle cry out, “who is sufficient for these things?”

In the spirit of brotherly love and freedom, I would offer to such a young man a few reflections, which I trust he may, by the blessing of God, find to be of some service.

Bear in mind, I intreat you, or rather bear deeply engraven upon your heart, the great end of preaching. What is it? Not to win the applause of the world for your talents, learning, or eloquence. Not to acquire and heap up riches, which in this view may justly be branded as “filthy lucre.” Not to promote the interests of your sect exclusively, as if all others were to be treated only with enmity or contempt. No, none of these; but to be instrumental in the hand of God for delivering as many souls as possible from the dominion of sin and Satan, and training them in the way of holiness for immortal glory in Heaven. Make this your sacred ambition. Let souls redeemed from eternal ruin, through your subordinate agency, be your joy and the crown of your labours. Here your struggles and self-denial must commence. Without such a spirit as I have here described, you will not preach faithfully, nor affectionately, nor with prospects of success. And this spirit cannot be maintained without the habitual exercise of faith, humility, watchfulness, and prayer. Of all men upon earth, it behooves preachers of the Gospel to live the nearest to the cross of Christ and the throne of grace.

Good preaching, as to the matter of it, results from a competent general furniture of the mind, or knowledge of the things which belong to religion, and a special preparation for each individual performance in the pulpit. Neither of these supersedes the importance of the other.

As you are to seek your object in preaching by the communication of truth, strive to make yourself acquainted with the whole range of scriptural truth as extensively and accurately as may be practicable. Think not that because you have taken a course of theological instruction under an approved teacher, you have nothing farther to discover in the regions of divine revelation. The Bible is an inexhaustible treasury. It will richly repay your most diligent studies through a long life. Your crude ideas of things will be continually refined, and your narrow views enlarged. Twenty years hence you will humbly

acknowledge how little you knew at your first setting out of God and his providence, of the glorious Gospel of Christ, of the evils and devices of Satan, the snares of the world, and the deceitfulness of the human heart. And you will then be more sensible than you now are, how much still remains to be learned on these interesting subjects.

In the pursuit of this heavenly wisdom, study, principally and directly, the Bible itself. It is the Book of God. All other books are the productions of men. Use commentaries, dissertations, and systems of divinity, not as substitutes for the Word of God, but as helps to your understanding of its meaning. Call no uninspired man your master. Bring every thing to the test of Scripture; judging finally for yourself, according to the light which it may please God to bestow upon you. How can you honestly or heartily inculcate upon others doctrines and precepts which you have blindly taken upon trust, and the evidence of which, therefore, you cannot lay before your hearers?

History, travels, poetry, the philosophy of the mind, indeed polite literature in general, should engage a portion of your regard, not only as elegant relaxations, but especially as helps to the advantageous exhibition of religious truth. But avoid all writings marked with indecency or profaneness, as you would avoid deadly poison.

As to a special preparation for preaching, let it be your first rule, whatever be the subject, to make Jesus Christ the centre and soul of it. This is the apostolic model. Variety, indeed, is to be aimed at, for preserving the attention of your hearers. But let every doctrine you deliver, point to Christ, and illustrate the necessity and glory of his redemption. Let every duty be founded upon his authority, and enforced by a sense of his love in "giving himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

The next rule is, preach always practically. The value of the Gospel as a whole, and of every branch of it in particular, lies in this, that it is a "doctrine according to godliness." A declaration without ideas is worth nothing. And equally to be despised are dry disquisitions, however subtle and ingenious, which never touch the heart, nor lead to any thing for the regulation of the conduct. Remember, your business is at once to enlighten and persuade.

Again, beware of undertaking a subject or a text above your skill to manage. The propriety of this rule is self-evident. Yet it is frequently violated; either from pitiable ignorance of the preacher's own incapacity, or from something worse, namely, a desire to be thought uncommonly smart and clever.

Another good rule is, keep close to your subject. There may be instances, though I think they rarely occur, when a sermon may take in an equal and cursory survey of many things. Generally some one doctrine or duty of the Gospel may be the subject of discourse; and other things which should be wanted for its illustration should be nearly or quite taken for granted, and not laboriously proved. A departure from this rule distracts the attention from the main point; dissipates the impression which should be made, and produces that tediousness which waries out all patience. By the way, so far as I can

judge, about three quarters of an hour is the best length of time for a sermon. Scarcely ever should an hour be exceeded. Too little time huddles up the subject superficially. And too much makes the audience anxious for the close; a state of mind completely unfavourable to beneficial hearing.

I would recommend moderation in the number of divisions and subdivisions of a discourse. Any method which severely tasks the memory cannot be a good one. I bethink myself, however, that the taste of the present day leans to the opposite extreme. We are told of a concealed method, which I suspect to be mostly a cover for the neglect of method altogether. We frequently hear sermons, in which it is impossible, at any time, to guess whereabouts we are, or to remember where we have been when all is over, for want of a thread of connexion to bind the parts orderly together.

On the writing of sermons, as a preparation for the pulpit, I would offer you a few remarks. I freely concede that writing promotes accuracy of thought; and that a man is likely to understand his subject more perfectly for having written upon it. Writing, therefore, should be practised, as time and health will allow. But I fear that the rigorous habit of writing out sermons at large, must generally cramp the mind in regard to what I call the general furniture or stock of knowledge. Besides the danger of such heavy toil to the body, does it not abstract too much time from reading? And if the question be between the reading of sermons, or reciting them from memory, and extempore preaching, I believe I have ninety-nine out of a hundred of mankind on my side, when I express my decided preference of the latter, before either of the former. Let the preacher study his subject well beforehand, making himself master of his leading points, and arranging his method; taking with him short notes of these, if he finds it necessary. But let him trust for language, and the minuter illustrations of his matter, to the animating inspiration of the sacred desk. There is a certain lively force in such a delivery, which cannot belong to mere reading; and still less, I should think, to that recitation which suspends every other faculty while the memory is straining to recollect what has been committed to it. A little practice in public speaking hardly ever fails to produce that self-possession which my scheme of preaching requires.

After all, you will have failed essentially in your preparations, if you have not asked earnestly of God to give you *the spirit of preaching*; a lively, affectionate zeal for the glory of his great name, and the salvation of perishing sinners. Let the exercises of the closet be always introductory to those of the sanctuary.

Suffer me now to place you in the pulpit. What a solemn position for a mortal man to occupy! Here you stand as an ambassador of Jesus Christ to your hearers. What you say to them in his name, is either to be the means of their eternal salvation, or their aggravated perdition. Your high office is to win to Christ the souls for whom he poured out his precious blood.

The first thing requisite here is, a modest, grave and benevolent deportment. It is a delightful thing to preach with a flow of genuine

feeling; and it is delightful to hear such preaching. But this cannot always be enjoyed. Whether we speak of constitutional animation or that gracious sensibility which comes directly from the spirit of God, some men are favoured with a great deal, and some with but little, of these endowments. And every man varies more or less from himself in these respects. But we have always a right to expect that a Christian preacher should be sincerely in earnest; that whether gifted with a state of tender feeling or not, he should, at least "be serious in a serious cause." Every thing trickish and theatrical, calculated to seduce the people away from your message to an admiration of your person or your manner, is exceedingly abominable, and to be most carefully avoided.

In immediate connexion with this, let me caution you against all affectation of feeling. Many a time, when we know that we ought strongly to feel what we are about, we are conscious that we do not feel. We yield to the temptation to assume the show of feeling, and make a parade, as dashing as we can, of sensibilities which have no existence. The artifice, however, seldom imposes upon any body. Is not this a shameful piece of hypocrisy? And moreover, to this vile source may be traced some of the worst faults of public speaking; such as the soporiferous whine, and the ear-tormenting larum of vociferation. Speak, I beseech you, always with simplicity, in the manner of natural and earnest conversation.

Let your style of language be plain. You never preach without addressing some hearers who have but little learning. These, indeed, constitute the majority of almost every congregation; and they have immortal souls to save as well as the more polished. If you would do them good, you must even take pains to avoid hard words and perplexing sentences. The mistaken applause which a few might give you for a refined and lofty style, would be a wretched compensation for the guilt of sending away the poor and the ignorant uninstructed. The Gospel of our Master is, emphatically, to be preached to the poor. Remember, nevertheless, that plainness of speech is not vulgarity. You may and ought to be plain without offending the most cultivated taste. If you would see an example of this kind of style, turn to one of the best books in the world, in every point of view; *Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*.

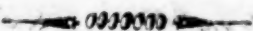
This rule brings to my mind a thing which might better, perhaps, have been mentioned before. Shun very deep and abstruse discussions in the pulpit. Such speculations are not of much use to any one; and the bulk of mankind can never be brought to understand or relish them. The doctrines of Christianity, so far as they can be well known, and so far as they relate to practice, are of easy apprehension. If a few individuals can reap any profit from laborious, metaphysical speculations, let them be the employment of the reading room, and not of the house of God. But to return from this digression.

Be not nice, in the pulpit, about rules of grammar and rhetorical canons. I wish you to be a perfect grammarian, and to conform to all the rules of good speaking. But banish these things, be not anxious about them, when you rise to address us in the name of God.—

Qualify yourself by private study for every thing that is correct and truly elegant in delivery; but descend not to such cares when you are urging us to escape from the wrath to come and lay hold on eternal life. I would not mention this if I had not frequently had painful experience of its pernicious effects. I have seen the mind of the preacher, while the most tremendous or heart-cheering truths were upon his tongue, trammelled with solicitude to square every word and sentence by the laws of Murray's Grammar and Blair's Lectures; as much engaged in adjusting his collocations and cadences, as a fop in adjusting the tie of his cravat. It was impossible that I could be edified under such a process. I would rather hear any poor, honest creature preach, who had never heard of a grammar or a book on oratory in his life.

Let these hints be received for what they may be worth. I close by returning to the point with which I set out. An abiding impression of the august and holy end for which the ordinance of preaching was appointed is the thing of prime concern. Let this be remembered and felt, and it will save you from every capital error.

PHILANDER.



A NARRATIVE

Of the state of Religion, within the bounds of the general assembly, of the Presbyterian Church; and of the general Associations of Connecticut, of New Hampshire, and of Massachusetts proper.

Every thing which relates to the Redeemer's kingdom is important to the world, and of peculiar interest to the people of God. The General Assembly, therefore, feel a pleasure in presenting to the churches, under their care, a summary of the state of religion within their bounds, during the past year.

In entering on this duty, they cannot conceal their grief, that, in many parts of our wide extended country, there are many vices still prevalent, such as profaneness, intemperance, sabbath breaking and gambling, vices these, which always will be, whilst they continue, a cause of just complaint, and of deep regret. In many instances, however, a check has been given to these degrading and sinful practices, by the salutary operation of moral societies. Societies of this character, if instituted on proper principles and conducted with suitable prudence, promise to be very useful in laying, at least, an outward restraint upon the disturbers of the peace and order of society.

In some instances too, we learn, with feelings of the greatest concern, that the walk and conversation even of professors, are not such, as becometh the gospel of Christ. They are cold and formal in their demeanour, and in their conduct conform to the vain customs of the world. Alas! they seem to have forgotten the solemnity of that transaction, when they laid their vows before the altar of God, and avouched the Lord Jehovah to be their God. The General Assembly feel it to be their duty, tenderly, but faithfully, to warn such of the danger of their condition, and the pernicious influence of their example, and earnestly to exhort them to strengthen the things that remain, which are ready to die.

Fidelity to the churches requires that these subjects of grief should be presented to their view; yet it is not to be understood that the evils complained of, are more prevalent than heretofore. There is, indeed, abundant reason to believe they are not. The general aspect of the church of God has never been more favourable within our knowledge, than at the present time. The age in which we live is to be characterized as the age of christian charity. Numerous associations are formed, which have for their object the alleviation of human misery: associations, by the efforts of which, the widow's heart is made glad, the orphan's tears are wiped away, and poverty is relieved in its cottage of sorrow. Nor has benevolence limited her exertions by the temporal necessities of mankind. A higher object has claimed her attention, and received it. The spiritual interests of the poor and the ignorant, have been considered, with a solicitude and a promptness, unparalleled in the history of the world.

In very many of our cities and populous villages, Sabbath schools have been instituted for children and adults, in which thousands are taught to read the word of God, and are instructed in the principles of religion. They are led also to the sanctuary of the Lord by their teachers, and thus enjoy the benefit of that gospel which, otherwise perhaps, multitudes of them had never heard. Connected herewith, we would likewise note the instruction of the young and ignorant by catechizing, and the instruction of bible classes, in most of our congregations; for these form a striking feature of the day. God has blessed these efforts, and Zion hath multiplied her children.

Religious Tract societies are increasing, both in number and in exertions, to the manifest advantage of truth, and piety.

Missionary societies also claim from the General Assembly a distinguished notice—aided by those consecrated treasures, which have been placed at the disposal of these associations, the gospel has been faithfully and successfully preached through a wide extent of country.—It is with emotions of joy, which cannot be expressed, that we have heard of the zeal, the patience, and the intrepidity of those heralds of the cross, who, in the true spirit of their missionary character, have penetrated far into the wilderness, and have proclaimed salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ, where the gospel before had been scarcely ever heard. Never, never before have such narratives been presented to the Assembly; so interesting in their detail, so cheering in their aspect.

In more places than one, the Spirit of the Lord has shed down his holy influences on their labours; so that many precious souls, through their instrumentality, it is humbly hoped, have passed from death unto life, and are enrolled amongst the friends of Jesus. It is a pleasure too, of no ordinary kind, to be able to state, the missionary spirit is increasing both among preachers and people; and many young men, entering the ministry, are not intimidated by the exertions and privations of a missionary life; they are ready to spend, and be spent, in that blessed cause, which contains in itself a character of infinite importance;

"Enough to fill an Angel's hands,
It filled a Saviour's heart."

In the establishment of Bible Societies there has been the most extensive combination. Within the hallowed circle of their operation, all denominations of Christians have met. And the past year will be remembered, by future generations, for an expression of attachment to the sacred volume, by the increase of these Societies, before unknown. And here, it ought not to be concealed, that the Establishment of the AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY has been a principal means of giving this impulse to public sentiment. There is a grandeur in its character, which commands respect—and an influence in its extension, which must be felt.

Among the patrons of these charities which we have recorded, and who merit the gratitude of the church, the General Assembly recognize the unceasing efforts and liberality of *pious Females*—their benevolence has flowed in various channels, and their zeal will be long held as a precious memorial of their virtue and their piety. The Cent Societies are peculiarly their own, by which sixteen young men have been supported the last year in whole or in part at the Assembly's Seminary at Princeton. *Go on ye sisters in Zion and ye mothers in Israel until the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord!*

The monthly concert for special prayer has been almost universally attended; and herein a union of sentiment and desire, has been expressed by our churches, which affords the brightest prospects to the Redeemer's Kingdom. Indeed, Zion has been evidently extending the curtains of her habitation. She has lengthened her cords, and strengthened her stakes. The number of her branches has been increased, and her members been multiplied. Until now, we have never known such bright displays of sovereign grace, nor marked so distinctly, the triumphs of the cross of Christ. God hath indeed been seen, in the operations of his spirit, to have dwelt with man upon the earth. It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.

From the particular accounts which the Assembly have received, from the Presbyteries under their care, they feel a high satisfaction in learning the measure of ministerial faithfulness, with which the pastors of the churches have generally discharged the arduous duties of their station. The labours of many of them have been particularly blessed by the great head of his church, who, when he ascended up on high, received gifts for men. Some have been honourably employed in building up the saints in the faith and order of the Gospel, whilst others have been permitted to witness among their people the powerful influences of converting grace and have seen sinners flocking to Jesus, like clouds and like doves to their windows. This will be abundantly evident by recording some of the wonders which God hath wrought. And here, the Assembly would particularly mention, the Presbyteries of *Northumberland, Champlain, Grand-River, Cayuga, Onondago, Geneva, Columbia, and Jersey*, as greatly distinguished by the glorious manifestations of divine mercy, to some of the congregations within their bounds. In *Northumberland Presbytery*, the congregation of Shamokin has been graciously visited with an outpouring of

the divine spirit. And though this be a day of small things, much good has already resulted from this merciful visitation, and we cannot but hail it as the token of a brighter scene.

In the Presbytery of Champlain there have been several revivals of religion, which have gladdened the hearts of ministers and christians, dispersed through that region. More than an hundred souls, in the course of eight months, have been made the hopeful subjects of Divine grace in the congregation of Malone. In Chatteaugay, Constable, Bangor, Moira, and Dickenson, Plattsburgh, Chazee, and Lewis, the power of that Holy Spirit has been felt, by which we are convinced of sin, and converted unto God.

Grand-River Presbytery has experienced the loving kindness of the Lord, and received the word of his salvation—Zion's friends rejoice and magnify the riches of his grace. In the congregations of Austinburgh, Morgan and Rome, the work has been powerful and glorious. In Greene, Aurora, Lebanon, Jefferson, and Bucksville, the Lord hath manifested the power of his Gospel.

Cayuga Presbytery is among those favoured portions of our church which the Lord hath blessed indeed. Ithaca, Lisle, Sempronius, Scipio and Danby, have richly partaken in divine influence; but especially, have we to mention the congregation of Lock, as particularly distinguished for those trophies of grace, which the Lord hath gathered to the honour of his glorious name.

In the Presbytery of Onondago, the congregations of Homer, Fabius, Cazenovia, and Otisco, are to be numbered among the places which it hath delighted the Lord to bless—Here a rich harvest of souls hath been gathered; and the spirit of God hath descended, like dew on the new mown grass.

Geneva Presbytery also, has been remembered with times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. The effusions of Divine grace have been copious and extensive; and the heavenly influence has been particularly shed, upon the congregations of Bloomfield, Lyons, Romulus, Middlesex, Gorham and Palmyra—Hundreds of the wretched sinners of our race, have here been brought to cry out "*what must we do to be saved,*" and here have found that Saviour, whose blood cleanseth from all sin. Similar influences, though of a less extent, have been experienced in the congregations of Geneva, Rochester, Buffalo, Wolcott, Victor, Livonia, and Hamburgh. The results of these revivals, it is impossible for us to estimate—They will doubtless be better learnt around the throne of God and the Lamb, from the songs of the redeemed.

The Presbytery of Columbia record, in their reports, illustrious mercy and wondrous grace—The Lord hath visited several destitute places within the bounds of this Presbytery with his comforting and reviving influences. The congregations of Catskill and Cambridge have been manifestly blessed of God. But, in the city of Troy, the glory and the grace of God has been displayed with peculiar splendour and holy triumph. About 500, in the several denominations, are said to have professed the name of Jesus—some of all ages and conditions, from the child of ten, to the old man of eighty years, have

been made the subjects of Divine mercy. What heart does not exult in such a work of the Lord, and take part with those blessed intelligences of the throne of God, who desire to look into the mysteries of grace, and rejoice when sinners repent.

The Presbytery of Jersey speak of wonders of mercy. And scenes of Divine and sovereign grace are exhibited in some of their congregations, overwhelming by the grandeur of the work, and the extent of the operation. Two congregations in Newark, and the congregations of Elizabethtown and Orange have felt in *very deed* that the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, unto all who believe. The congregations also, of Connecticut-farms and Bloomfield, have received a copious effusion of the spirit of God. Multitudes, in this region, have embraced the Lord Jesus in hope of eternal life. The attention of the people of colour is here said also, to be excited to the great things of their peace—This Presbytery reckon more than fifteen hundred persons as being either deeply impressed with the importance of religion, or else triumphing in the joys of faith, in the societies here recorded.

The Theological Seminary at Princeton, is kindly remembered of God, and its influence is most happy. The missionary spirit, which is manifestly increasing in this institution, is a subject of pleasing congratulation to all the friends of the Redeemer's kingdom. The number of students in this seminary is forty-seven.

The Theological Seminary, under the care of the *Synod of Virginia*, is also represented in a prosperous state.

The Assembly further notice with pleasure, the general attention and exertion to alleviate the condition of the people of colour, in almost all parts of the country—A society has been formed for the colonization of free people of this description, and is patronized by the first characters of our union.

An institution, likewise, is established under the direction of the synod of New-York and New Jersey, for the education of men of colour for the ministry, and as instructors of their brethren.

From the *General Association of Connecticut* we learn, with interest, that some revivals of religion have taken place, and the cause of Jesus is advancing. Many happy fruits of past revivals are now enjoyed, and great things are still doing for Zion in that section of our country. Bible, Tract, Missionary societies are numerous, and useful in their influence; especially a society for the education of young men for the gospel ministry, which promises much good. We rejoice to learn, that in this state, there is also a Seminary established for the education of heathen youth in our own country, at which there are twelve of this description, from different countries. And also an institution, which hath for its object the education of the deaf and dumb. This establishment is in successful operation, and is supported by the general liberality of the country.

In *Massachusetts proper*, there have been some revivals of interesting character and extent. The blessed fruits, resulting from the showers of grace which were mentioned in our narrative for the last year, will be held in everlasting remembrance by the people of God. The

various societies which have been established in this state to promote christian morals, and to extend the kingdom of the Redeemer, have continued their efforts with undiminished zeal and success. To individuals whom God hath distinguished by the possession of wealth, he has given the disposition to become distinguished benefactors of the church.

The Theological Seminary at Andover is flourishing. It has sixty-seven students; many of whom, like their brethren in the sister seminary at Princeton, are devoted to missions. The society, recently established to educate pious young men for the christian ministry, promises much good to the church. It has on its funds, sixty-six students, in various seminaries, and in various stages of academical learning.

From *New Hampshire* we are happy to learn, that the interests of evangelical religion are in a progressive state. That a missionary society has been long established, together with a Bible Society. Societies, for charitable objects, and for the reformation of morals, are multiplied and attended with salutary effects. About 20 congregations have been blessed with revivals.

From *Vermont* we have no formal report; but, by authentic information, we learn that upwards of one hundred societies have been visited with effusions of the Holy Spirit. The work is most remarkable and illustrious. The heritage of Zion is refreshed, and the temples of the Lord are filled with worshippers.

On the whole, the past year has been a year of Zion's glory within our bounds. Cheering are the prospects of the future; and the signs of the times deserve our deep attention. The church is, at present, to be viewed in a light peculiarly interesting. The friends of Zion are awake from a long sleep. The heralds of the gospel are running to and fro through the earth, and knowledge is increasing. Mighty exertions are now making throughout the christian world. Emperors and kings, with men of every rank, combine their efforts to circulate the sacred scriptures around the globe. Prejudice and bigotry, which have so long separated those who served our common Lord, and promoted a common cause, seem by degrees to be passing away. The spirit of God is marvellously shed forth on some parts of Zion. Fervency and concert in prayer appear to be increasing among christians. May we not then hope, that the night is far spent; that the day is at hand? may we not hope, that the time approaches, when the kingdom of this world shall become the kingdom of God and his Christ! EVEN SO, COME LORD JESUS, COME QUICKLY! AMEN.

Published by order of the General Assembly,

Attest—WILLIAM NEILL, Stated Clerk.

Philadelphia, May, 1817.

AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY.

THE first Anniversary of this important National Institution was celebrated in this city on Thursday the 8th instant, in the large room of Washington Hall.

The venerable President of the Society having been prevented by ill state of health from attending, the Senior Vice-President, present, took the chair, at 11 o'clock, A. M.

Previously to entering on the business of the day, the Rev. Dr. Romeyn, at the request of the presiding officer, read the 55th chapter of Isaiah.

The Rev. Secretary for Domestic Correspondence then read a letter from the Hon. Elias Boudinot, the President mentioning his great regret that his state of health put it out of his power to attend the meeting, and expressing his warm and unabating attachment to the Institution, with his utmost ardent prayers for its success. Letters were also read from the following Vice-Presidents of the Society:—Hon. John Jay, of Bedford, New-York; His Excellency John Cotton Smith, of Connecticut; Hon. Bushrod Washington, of Virginia,* Chief Justice of the United States; Hon. Judge Tilghman, of Pennsylvania; Hon. S. Thompson, Chief Justice of the State of N. York; and from his Excellency Daniel D. Tompkins, Vice-President of the United States,—all apologizing for their unavoidable absence from the meeting, and testifying their most decided and cordial approbation of the Society, and expressing their fervent wishes for its prosperity.

The Rev. Secretary then read the Annual Report of the Board of Managers; which will be given entire as soon as practicable.

After the reading of the Report was finished, the following resolutions were passed unanimously:

1st. On motion of the Rev. W. Hill, President of the Frederick County Bible Society, (Vir.) seconded by James Buchanan, Esq. the British Consul, residing at New-York,

Resolved, That the Report now read be adopted, and that it be printed under the direction of the Board of Managers.

2d. On motion of Mr. John Griscom, member of the Society of Friends, seconded by the Rev. Francis Heron, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Resolved, That the thanks of this Meeting be presented to the President of this Society, for his zealous and persevering efforts to form this institution and promote its interests.

3d. On motion of the Rev. Dr. Blatchford, of Lansingburg, New-York, seconded by the Hon. Aaron Ogden, of New-Jersey,

Resolved, That the thanks of this Meeting be presented to the Vice Presidents for their patronage and support, and the Treasurer and Secretaries for their services during the last year.

4th. On motion of the Rev. Dr. McLeod, of New-York, and seconded by the Rev. Joshua L. Wilson, of Cincinnati, Ohio,

Resolved, That the thanks of this Meeting be presented to the Board of Managers, for their exertions in conducting the business of the Society.

5th. On motion of William Jay, Esq. of Bedford, West Chester County, seconded by Mr. Thomas Eddy, of the Society of Friends,

[* A mistake has been made here in the title of Judge Washington, EDITOR.]

Resolved, That the thanks of this Society be presented to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, for their early and decided approbation of the Institution of this Society, expressed in their narrative of the state of Religion within their bounds.

6th. On motion of Jeremiah Evarts, Esq. of Boston, seconded by the Rev. Mr. Felthus, of New-York,

Resolved, That the thanks of this Society be presented to the numerous Auxiliary Bible Societies, for their exertions to promote the object, and augment the funds of this institution.

7th. On motion of Samuel Bayard, Esq. of Princeton, and seconded by Hon. A. Kirkpatrick, Chief Justice of the state of New-Jersey,

Resolved, That the thanks of the Meeting be given to those congregations and individuals who have constituted their Pastors members for life of this Society.

8th. On motion of Joshua M. Wallace, Esq. of Burlington, New-Jersey, and seconded by the Rev. Mr. Hart, of Stonington, Con.

Resolved, That the thanks of this Meeting be presented to all those individuals and Societies who have contributed to the funds of this Institution.

Several of the gentlemen, who moved and seconded the above resolutions, supported them by highly animating and appropriate addresses; which, while they evinced the deep interest felt by the speakers in the grand object which had, on this occasion, convened persons of opposite political sentiments, and of almost every religious denomination, from different and distant parts of the country, were also calculated to inspire their hearers with the most delightful sensations, in the view of the prosperity that, under the smiles of a gracious Providence, had already attended the exertions made to promote this great and beneficent undertaking, and of the bright prospects of its future usefulness. We shall endeavour to procure for insertion, extracts from some of the speeches delivered on this occasion.

We cannot omit to notice a letter from the President of the Society, which was read after the vote of thanks to that worthy and munificent benefactor of the institution, and which breathed the glowing feelings of his benevolent soul, in a language worthy of the first and best supporter of this noble fabric of Christian philanthropy. We expect to insert it in some future number. [Ch. Herald.]

— *conclude* —
From the Religious Remembrancer.

A PASTORAL LETTER

From the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States of America, to the Churches under their care.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, to the Churches under their care, wish grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
Very Dear Brethren,

ASSEMBLED, by the good providence of God, as the supreme judiciary of our church, we are constrained to address you, and to endeavour to impart to you some of those views and feelings to which

our councils have given rise, and which are suggested by the present aspect of the Church and of the world.

From the printed "Narrative of the State of Religion within our bounds," which accompanies this address, you will learn, that, although we have heard of some facts which are matter of regret and humiliation, "the general aspect of the Church of God, has never been more favourable, within our knowledge, than at the present time." The gradual increase of gospel light; the extension of the blessings of education to all classes and ages; the growing diffusion of missionary zeal and exertions; the rapid multiplication of Bible Societies, and, through their instrumentality, the wonderful spread of the knowledge of the word of life in languages and countries hitherto strangers to the sacred volume; the numerous associations for evangelical, benevolent, and humane purposes, which have arisen, and are daily arising, in every part of our bounds; and, above all, the converting and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, which have been poured out, for some time past, and especially during the last year, in many of the congregations belonging to our communion; form an assemblage which cannot fail to be, in a high degree, interesting and animating to the friends of pure and undefiled religion; an assemblage, which, while it gratifies, for the present, the pious and benevolent heart, must excite the most precious hopes for the future. Such mighty plans of benevolence; such wonderful combinations; such a general movement of mankind, in promoting the great cause of human happiness were, surely, never before witnessed! The days of darkness, we fondly hope, are passing away; and the period drawing nigh when the angel bearing the trumpet of the everlasting Gospel, shall carry his holy, life-giving message, to every kindred, and people, and nation, and tongue.

The General-assembly, standing, as it is their privilege to do, at the confluence of so many streams of information on these great subjects, while they communicate a summary of this information to the churches under their care, desire to accompany it with a word of affectionate exhortation, the object of which is to engage every heart and every hand, in promoting to the utmost of their power the interests of that kingdom, which is *not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*

At such a period, dear brethren, let it be impressed upon the mind of every member of the church, that we are called to humble, diligent, persevering exertion. Much has been done; but much more remains to be done; and much, we hope, will be done by us. Every day makes a demand upon the time, the affections, the prayers, the property, and the influence of the people of God, which it would be ingratitude, cruelty, nay, treachery, to repel. Let every one, then, in his place and proportion, endeavour daily to add something to the common amount of effort to *prepare the way of the Lord.* No one can tell how much it may please the Sovereign Disposer of events to accomplish by means of the humblest exertions. This, however, we know, that those who are *stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, shall find that their labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

Let the MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL in our communion, be every where found engaged in preaching the truth, as it is in Jesus, with affectionate zeal. Let them go before their people in every holy example, and in every pious and benevolent exertion. Let it be manifest to all, that they seek *not their own, but the things which are Jesus Christ's*. Surely there never was a time when the watchmen on the walls of Zion were more solemnly bound to give themselves wholly to their work; or when they had more encouragement to plan and labour for their Master's honour! Surely there never was a time, when those whose duty it is to guide the exertions of their fellow-men, had more reason to feel their responsibility, and to ask for wisdom and strength from above! Let ministers take great and comprehensive views of the signs of the times, and the prospects of the church! and while they point out the way to those who are willing to be *workers together with God*: let it be seen that it is their *meat and drink* to share in the labours as well as in the rewards of the Redeemer's kingdom.

Let all the MEMBERS OF OUR CHURCHES consider themselves as called upon, in their several stations, to do something,—to do much for Christ. Millions of our race are still sunk in ignorance and depravity. Dark and waste places abound, even in our most populous and enlightened neighbourhoods, and still more in the remote portions of our church. In very large districts within the United States, there are no Bibles, no Sabbaths, no Sanctuaries, none to shew men the way of salvation. Can a single heart be unimpressed, or a single hand idle, while such calls for compassion and exertion abound?—No, brethren; these obligations, we trust, are too tender not to be felt;—these calls too solemn not to be heard. Be entreated, then, with one accord, to come forward to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Embrace every opportunity, to the extent of the abilities which God has given you, to form, and vigorously support, Missionary Associations; Bible Societies; plans for the distribution of religious tracts; and exertions for extending the benefits of knowledge, and especially of spiritual knowledge, to all ages and classes of persons around you. Exert yourselves, individually, and in combination, to oppose all those degrading and destructive vices over which we have so long had reason to mourn. Endeavour by your example and your influence, to discourage the unnecessary use of spirituous liquors; to promote the sanctification of the Lord's day; to guard against a criminal conformity to the world; to promote a general attendance on the means of grace;—and to advance the great interests of truth, purity, and righteousness, *in all manner of conversation*.

In these hallowed labours, let none refuse to join. It is among the distinguished glories of the nineteenth century, that PIOUS FEMALES are more extensively associated, and more actively useful, in promoting evangelical and benevolent objects, than in any former period of the world.—Let them go on with increasing activity and ardour in these exertions, so worthy of *women professing godliness*, and so useful to mankind. And let them, by precept, as well as by example, train up their daughters in principles and habits so well calculated to

elevate the female character, and to enlarge the sum of human happiness.

Let not even LISPING CHILDHOOD, or TENDER YOUTH be idle.—Let every *Bible Class*, every School association, every employment which brings your beloved children together, be made a medium for conveying to their minds that benign impression, which shall enlist them on the side of truth and of the church of God, from the earliest dawn of reason. Happy congregations, happy families, in which even *babes and sucklings*, shall be taught, as in times of old, to sing—*Hosanna to Him that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest!*

In a word, let your plans of carrying on these works of piety, and benevolence embrace every class and every age; and be pursued with growing ardour, until every congregation within our bounds shall be completely organized for exertion to promote the temporal and eternal welfare of men:—until every heart that can lift a prayer to the throne of grace, and every hand that can cast a mite into the treasury of God, shall be fully engaged in this mighty effort of christian charity. *Until the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose; until men, under the reign of millennial glory, (we trust not far distant,) shall live together as brethren indeed, having no other wishes than to promote their common happiness, and to glorify their common God.*

To these efforts in behalf of the cause of Christ join fervent, united PRAYER. We need not remind you, brethren, that all Zion's blessings come down from her King and Head; and that he *will be inquired of* by his people to do for them that which they need and desire. We are persuaded that all those periods, and churches which have been favoured with special revivals of Religion, have been also distinguished by VISIBLE UNION AND CONCERT IN PRAYER.—We entreat you, brethren, to cherish this union and concert. We especially exhort you to pay renewed and more solemn attention to the MONTHLY CONCERT IN PRAYER, recommended by a former Assembly, and so generally and happily observed. Has not the Saviour promised, that if any two of his people agree as touching any thing which they desire, He will grant their request? What blessings, then, may we not hope will be shed down upon the Church, when the thousands of our Israel are found bowing together, before the throne of mercy, saying, *for Zion's sake, we will not hold our peace, and for Jerusalem's sake we will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth!*

Endeavour to maintain A SPIRIT OF HARMONY WITH ALL DENOMINATIONS OF CHRISTIANS. When you *contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints*, and bear a faithful testimony to the Apostolic doctrine and order, which we profess to receive; let no bigotry, or prejudice, no party rancour or offensive crimination, pollute your testimony. Remember that the period is approaching, when all real Christians shall see eye to eye; when they shall be united in opinion as well as in affection. Cherish now the sentiments which correspond with this delightful anticipation. *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and evil speaking, be put away from among you, with all malice;*

and continually look and pray for the happy period when believers of every name shall agree to act together upon the great principles of our common salvation.

Finally, dear brethren, be UNITED AMONG YOURSELVES. If you desire to profit by your spiritual privileges; if you hope to be instrumental in promoting the cause of Christ, or to be honoured with his blessing; cherish harmony of affection, and union of effort.—Besides the common bonds of Christian love, which unite the great family of believers; the ministers and members of the Presbyterian Church are cemented by a compact which every honest man cannot fail to appreciate. We mean the "Confession of Faith" of our church. While we believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice, we do also, if we deal faithfully with God and man, sincerely receive and adopt this Confession, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures. Let us adhere to the standard with fidelity; and endeavour to transmit to our children pure and undefiled, a treasure, which our Fathers at great expense have, under God, bequeathed to us. But while we hold that *form of sound words* which we have received, let us guard against indulging a spirit of controversy, than which few things are more unfriendly to the life and power of godliness. It is never necessary to sacrifice charity, in order to maintain faith and hope. That differences of opinion, acknowledged on all hands, to be of the minor class, may and ought to be tolerated, among those who are agreed in great and leading views of Divine truth, is a principle on which the godly have so long and so genenerally acted, that it seems unnecessary, at the present day, to seek arguments for its support. Our Fathers, in early periods of the history of our church, had their peculiarities and diversities of opinion; which yet, however, did not prevent them from loving one another, from cordially acting together; and by their united prayers and exertions, transmitting to us a goodly inheritance. Let us emulate their moderation and forbearance, and we may hope to be favoured with more than their success.

The great adversary will, no doubt, be disposed to sow the seeds of discord and division among you. But resist him in this, as well as in all his other insidious efforts. Surely those who can come together on the great principles of our public Standards, however they may differ on non-essential points, ought not to separate, or to indulge bitterness or prejudice against each other. Dear brethren, 'let there be no divisions among you;—but be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment. Follow the things which make for peace, and the things whereby ye may edify one another. Behold how good, and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! Brethren, farewell, love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. Be of one mind; live in peace, and the God of love and of peace shall be with you.' AMEN!

Signed by order of the General Assembly,

JONAS COE, Moderator.